

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JIDDA 04695 031651Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
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EXDIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGSJC PBOR
SUBJ: JULIA AND PETER WHITE TALK WITH ISRAELIS

1. JULIA AND PETER WHITE SPENT 24 HOURS HERE GIVING US
IMPRESSIONS OF ISRAEL ON PAST WEEK'S VISIT. THEY MET WITH
SO-CALLED ISRAELI INTELLECTUAL GROUP AND SPENT 2-1/2 HOURS
WITH BEGIN. IN ADDITION, WHITES INDIVIDUALLY TALKED TO
NUMEROUS OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PERSONS. THEIR CONCLUSIONS
ARE:

A) ISRAEL IS PARANOID AND ADMITTEDLY SO ABOUT SECURITY.
NERVES FRAYED FROM CONSTANT THREAT OF HOSTILITIES PLUS TRAUMA
OF INTERNAL POLITICAL CHANGE ALONG WITH FRESH EXAMINATION OF
MID-EAST PICTURE BY NEW U.S. PRESIDENT CAUSES ISRAEL TO BE
LIKE COILED SNAKE READY TO STRIKE INDISCRIMINATELY IN ANY
DIRECTION, ESPECIALLY IF PRODDED TOO HARD WITH TOO SHORT
A STICK. SOME SAY, ACCORDING TO WHITES
THAT SAMSON
ATTITUDE IS GROWING WHILE MASADA COMPLEX IS DECLINING.
ISRAEL NOW

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MORE WILLING TO BRING DOWN WORLD IF IT APPEARS
ISRAEL LIKELY TO BE DESTROYED. THIS ATTITUDE ESPECIALLY
DISTURBING IN VIEW OF WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT ISRAEL HAS
NUCLEAR CAPABILITY.

B) ON POSITIVE SIDE, WHITES FOUND BEGIN'S PERSONALITY
AND ATTITUDE BETTER THAN
THEY HAD EXPECTED. HE SEEMED TO

BE A POLISHED, AFFABLE GENTLEMAN WHO STILL PROJECTS POSITIVE, EVEN STUBBORN BUT NOT INFLEXIBLE BELIEFS. WHITES FEEL THAT HIS PERSONALITY IS MUCH LIKE THAT OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND THAT FIRST MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO WILL BE CRITICAL IN THAT IT COULD PRODUCE CHEMISTRY OF STRONG COMPATIBILITY OR STRONG CONFRONTATION.

C) WHITES CONCLUDED THAT BEGIN IS BEING MISLED BY SOME AMERICAN JEWISH LEADERS WHO PICTURE CONGRESS AS ABSOLUTE CHECKMATE ON ANY PRESIDENTIAL POSITION THEY DEEM CONTRARY TO ISRAEL'S INTEREST. ISRAELIS BELIEVE THAT CONGRESS COMPLETELY CONTROLLED BY AMERICAN JEWISH GROUPS ON ALL ISSUES INVOLVING ISRAEL

2. WHITES WERE QUESTIONED AT LENGTH ABOUT CARTER PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDES. THEY WILL HOLD FURTHER MEETINGS WITH ISRAELI LEADERS UPON RETURN TO JERUSALEM TODAY. THEY HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT CARTER REACTS NEGATIVELY TO PRESSURE GROUPS AND WILL RESIST APPROACHES HERETOFORE USED SUCCESSFULLY BY PRO-ISRAEL GROUPS. VIVID ANALOGY THEY USED IS ONE ATTRIBUTED TO IRON THAT PRESIDENT WHEN CONVINCED OF RIGHTNESS OF POSITION WITHDRAWS INTO SHELL LIKE SOUTH GEORGIA TURTLE AND PLods ON TO OBJECTIVE.

3. BEGIN TOLD WHITES THAT HE WOULD NOT GO TO GENEVA IF THERE IS A PLO DELEGATION PRESENT, BUT IF PLO MEMBERS WERE INCLUDED IN THE JORDANIAN DELEGATION, THERE IS "NOTHING HE SECRET

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COULD DO ABOUT IT." HE ALSO SAID THAT ISRAELIS HAVE A HISTORIC RIGHT TO THE WEST BANK BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THEY HAVE TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER IT. ON JERUSALEM

BEGIN TOLD WHITES THAT CITY COULD BE OPEN TO ANYONE BUT THAT ISRAELIS WOULD FIGHT TO LAST MAN TO KEEP ENTIRE CITY UNDER ISRAELI CONTROL.

4. WHEN WHITES RETURN YOU MAY WANT MORE FORMAL DEBRIEFING INCLUDING RESULTS OF LAST MEETINGS IN ISRAEL.

5. ON LIGHTER SIDE, AS POSSIBLE SUGGESTIONS TO PRESIDENT FOR CONVERSATIONAL

TENSION BREAKERS DURING BEGIN VISIT:

- 1) BEGIN CONSIDERS HIMSELF THE "JIMMY WHO" OF ISRAEL;
 - 2) BEGIN'S OPPONENTS CREDIT CARTER'S PRE-ELECTION STATEMENTS WITH INFLUENCING SUFFICIENT VOTES TO SWING ELECTION. PRESIDENT COULD TELL BEGIN THAT IF THIS ACCUSATION IS TRUE, HE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR RESCUING BEGIN FROM 30 YEARS OF BACK-BENCH PARLIAMENTARY OBSCURITY.
- WEST

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